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Pattern of conferences

Utilization of conference facilities and services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

Report of the Secretary-General*

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with section II.A, paragraphs 7 and 8, of General Assembly resolution 57/283 B of 15 April 2003 and provides statistical information on the utilization of conference facilities and services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) for the period 2000-2003. The 2003 figures are projections based partly on first quarter results and partly on planned activities. The figures provided in the tables for 2000, 2001 and 2002 at the end of the report are based on actual records of meetings and documents processed. They differ from the figures presented in earlier reports owing to two factors, namely, (a) improved ability to clarify types of meetings (including calendar and non-calendar meetings) and (b) increased accuracy of reporting based on electronic tools to track utilization of conference resources. The increasing demand for statistics since the Division of Conference Services/UNON became a member of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services in September 2000 and the transfer of Governing Council meetings budgets of the United Nations Environment Programme/UN-Habitat in the biennium 2002-2003 to section 2 of the budget prompted improved methodology in tracking the allocation of resources to that area. The installation of the integrated Documents Control and Productivity Monitoring System (iDCPMS) in February 2002 has also enhanced record keeping capability, including the reliability of data.

Planning and coordination (Table 1)

2. Calendar meetings with interpretation showed fluctuation from the first year of the biennium to the second year, mainly because only one calendar meeting, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is held in the first year of each biennium, while two Governing Council meetings (UNEP and UN-Habitat) are held in the second year. The quarterly meetings of their Committees of Permanent

* The present report is a presentation of statistical information and as such has no summary and recommendations.

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Representatives are held throughout the biennium. UN-Habitat intends to make the World Urban Forum a biennial occurrence and, being an intergovernmental body meeting, it may become a Governing Council event as from 2006, in which case it will increase the number of calendar meetings with interpretation. In the case of non-calendar meetings, a steady increase of 10 to 15 per cent is expected in the number of meetings with interpretation each year until the end of the biennium 2004-2005 before stabilizing. The Conference of the parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which was the largest meeting held in Nairobi in April 2000, influenced the interpretation figures reported that year.

Interpretation assignments (Table 2)

3. The number of assignments for calendar meetings fluctuates in the same manner indicated in paragraph 2, depending on how many Governing Council meetings are held each year. For non-calendar meetings there is a steady growth (around 10 to 11 per cent) since the establishment of a permanent Interpretation Service in Nairobi in 2001. The high figure recorded in 2000 may also be attributed to the CITES meeting held in Nairobi that year, which attracted an exceptionally large number of delegates (around 3,000).

Translation and editorial services (Table 3)

4. The significant increase in in-house translation from the period 2000-2001 to 2002 (17 per cent) was due to increased use of short-term staff, some of whom were hired for three to six months. That trend has been curtailed in view of its cost. The current management of the Division of Conference Services/UNON is making increasing use of contractual and remote translation, which are considerably more cost-effective. The translation output is expected to revert to the level reported for the period 2000-2001 as from the biennium 2004-2005.

Text processing (Table 4)

5. Text processing showed a stable trend and is expected to remain stable into the next biennium.

Printing and distribution (Table 5)

6. The printing figure reported for the period 2000-2001 tallies with previous reports, while those for the period 2002-2003 have been reviewed downwards in view of new technologies which allow for the electronic transmission of documents to meeting destinations for on-site reproduction. In the case of distribution, the trend is expected to decline after 2003, with increasing use of web sites for accessing meeting documents.

Division of Conference Services, United Nations Office at Nairobi

Statistical reporting for the period 2000 - 2003

Table 1 - Planning and coordination

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Calendar meetings				
With interpretation	21	68	30	58
Without interpretation				
Sub-total	**21**	**68**	**30**	**58**
Non-calendar meetings				
With interpretation	379	253	371	385
Without interpretation	617	1 111	751	1 018
Sub-total	**996**	**1 364**	**1 122**	**1 403**
Calendar and non-calendar meetings				
With interpretation	400	321	401	443
Without interpretation	617	1 111	751	1 018
Total	**1 017**	**1 432**	**1 152**	**1 461**

Table 2 – Interpretation

Number of assignments *				
Calendar meetings	232	1 131	611	1 212
Non-calendar meetings	1 911	1 635	1 898	1 950
Total	**2 143**	**2 766**	**2 509**	**3 162**

Table 3 - Translation and editorial services

(a) Translation *(words)*				
In-house	**4 624 772**	**4 806 798**	**8 204 042**	**6 103 725**
Contractual	1 831 434	3 963 930	1 432 283	3 872 807
Total	**6 456 206**	**8 770 728**	**9 636 325**	**9 976 532**
(b) Editing (words)	1 109 579	1 970 886	979 093	2 501 640

Table 4 - Text-processing (words)

In-house	5 734 351	6 777 685	9 183 134	8 605 364
Contractual	1 831 434	3 963 930	1 432 283	1 936 404
Total	**7 565 785**	**10 741 615**	**10 615 417**	**10 541 768**

Table 5 - Printing and distribution				
Reproduction (*thousands of pages*)**	**52 575**	**62 475**	**42 875**	**47 225**
Distribution (*thousands of pages*)***	**92 006**	**109 331**	**75 031**	**82 644**
* Includes freelance interpreters hired to complete the team.				
** Reproduction work done in Nairobi only.				
*** Includes distribution for meetings by UNEP Convention secretariats held outside Nairobi.				